

JiannaKole- 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

Homeroom: Miss. Shanabrook

### MLK Memorial, Washington D.C.:

When people hear the name of Martin Luther King Jr., many of them first think about his famous speech, "I Have a Dream," a speech he delivered while on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in 1963. Martin Luther King Jr. made life improving steps into the new world that we live in today. Without him and a few other people's help, segregation would still be a part of our culture today. However, greatness does not always last. The extraordinary life of MLK was suddenly and tragically ended on April 4, 1968 after being fatally shot at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee. In his honor and in our thanks to him, the MLK Memorial in West Potomac Park in Washington D.C. was created.

The memorial, also known as "The Stone of Hope," was made by Lei Yixin and it covers about four acres of land. It was first opened to the public on August 22, 2011 after more than two decades of planning, fundraising, and construction. On August 28 2011, there was to be a ceremony dedicating the memorial on the 48<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his famous speech, "I Have a Dream," however that was postponed until October 16, due to Hurricane Irene.

The memorial stands as a constant reminder of the wonderful deeds Dr. King has done for the greater good of America and its people. Not only will it remind us of that, it also serves as a memento that keeps his legacy alive. We as people can forget the best things in life and do things that set us apart because of small differences such as our appearances, heritage, gender, etc. However, MLK saw through that and saw us as we are; people of America. During his time, segregation was a reoccurring problem that separated the blacks from the whites. He, knowing the dangerous risks that followed, took a stand anyways and made the life-changing speech that we still remember today. MLK affected everyone who heard the speech, especially the African Americans. He provided the hope and strength they needed when they were being harassed and treated unfairly, as if they were inferior to the whites. The memorial that represents him will serve as an inspiring reminder that people can do tremendous things, even when society doubts them. The monument and Dr. King inspired me because he was somebody who stood up for not only himself, but for the other people that were suffering. It was a simple act, but it sparked hope and courage in everyone, including myself. He believed when no one else did.

Though his body is long dead, his spirit and legacy remain alive in our hearts and minds through the memorial built in Washington D.C in his honor. He not only changed America, but he changed the way we think and act towards other people. Today, because of him and many others, the people are united and treated fairly. We stand here to thank and honor Dr. King for everything he has done.